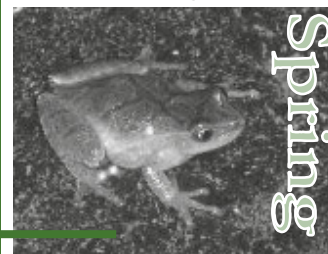


# CROSSSECTION



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## GREEN LAWNS

### IT ISN'T JUST ABOUT THE GRASS

BETH LANDERS, EDUCATION COORDINATOR

There has been a trend across this country to 'go green' – to consider the environment at the grocery store, the hardware store, and even with your cell phone charger. But in some situations, you can be too green to be 'green.' Most people associate a deep green color with a healthy lawn – and largely they are right. A well-established lawn is an important part of controlling soil erosion and absorbing stormwater. However, the quest for that green lawn can have negative effects on clean water and aquatic animals and plants, as well as people and our pets.

Every spring and fall, advertisements tell us to

fertilize our lawns. So we head to our nearest home improvement store, get a few bags of something, and spread it on the lawn, often without really knowing what our lawn needs and what is in the fertilizer we are applying. This costs the homeowner money, and can actually damage the lawn and pollute stormwater runoff.

There are several questions you should ask yourself about lawn fertilization. Do I need to fertilize? What do I need to fertilize with? When do I fertilize? How much fertilizer do I use? How do I safely handle fertilizer products? One thing to keep in mind is the best (and cheapest) fertilizer option is to leave your grass clippings on the lawn – Research has shown it won't promote thatch, and will return the water and nutrients to your soil.

You can begin to answer these questions by first completing a soil test. These are available most places that sell lawn and garden supplies, including Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District. The soil test tells you what nutrients are lacking in your soil and in some cases exactly how much fertilizer you should add. They will give you three numbers: N-P-K or nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium. These correspond to the numbers on the bag of fertilizer. For instance a 10-5-5 fertilizer will be 10% nitrogen, 5% phosphorous and 5% potassium. The results of your soil test will tell you the proper ratio of fertilizer for *your* soil.

Once you have your soil test results, you'll know if you need to fertilize and the amount and ratio of nutrients you need to use. Next you need to know when. Research has shown that the most effective time to fertilize the lawn is in the fall (August through November). In fact, over-application of fertilizer in the spring can set you up for lawn problems all

## NEW DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP WITH LAKE METROPARKS

Lake SWCD is expanding its education partnership with Lake Metroparks. This new effort offers programs in conservation and natural resource stewardship that benefit all of Lake County. Watch for upcoming classes on a wide variety of natural resource topics like improving storm water quality, rain barrel workshops, living with backyard streams, woodlot management, low impact gardening, rain gardens and more.



Look for this stewardship symbol in the new "Conservation Corner" section (within adult programs) and throughout the Lake Metroparks' *Parks Plus!* quarterly activity guide for special tips and information on improving storm water quality, natural resource management and more.

Lake SWCD is very excited about this opportunity because our organizations have similar missions and educational goals when it comes to Lake County's natural resources. This partnership delivers water quality and natural resource stewardship information and program offerings directly to 88,000 households in Lake County. Lake Metroparks is equally excited to be providing a new segment of public education programming that takes its stewardship mission and land management techniques beyond its park boundaries to assist landowners in the county.

### LOOK FOR THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS IN *PARKS PLUS*:

Forest Landowners Workshop - June 10

Build a Rain Barrel Workshop - June 17

Build a Rain Barrel Workshop - August 5

(Continued on page 3)

## LOCAL FOOD HAPPENINGS

MAURINE ORNDORFF, AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS TECHNICIAN

### FARMERS' MARKETS

We're on the cusp of the season where you can easily act on your desire to eat more locally grown food. Farmers' Markets will be starting up in mid-May with early greens, asparagus, rhubarb, and strawberries. Market locations, operating and opening dates can be found on our website at [www.lakecountyohio.org/soil/farmmarkets.htm](http://www.lakecountyohio.org/soil/farmmarkets.htm). If you are at a loss for recipe ideas, the internet is a great place to find creative preparation ideas for almost any taste.



### ADOPT A VINE PROGRAM

One for the Grape, our fund to protect vineyard lands and sustain the viticultural industry in Ashtabula, Geauga and Lake Counties, has expanded to make more options available. This spring, bare-root grafted vinifera vines are available for sale through the Adopt a Vine program. Adopt a Vine provides the opportunity to preserve vineyard lands and expand wine grape production acreage in Northeast Ohio.

Many people have lost their faith in the stock market, and are looking for different ways to invest their money. An investment in a local product that people can see and taste is a local, "green" and trustworthy option.

How to Adopt a Vine:

1. Select Cabernet Franc or Riesling.
2. Choose a vineyard: Ferrante, Debonne, Grand River Cellars or St. Joseph.
3. Choose a level:
  - Taster @ 3 vines for \$30
  - Enthusiast @ 10 vines for \$100
  - Connoisseur @ 50 vines for \$500
4. Visit [oneforthevine.com](http://oneforthevine.com) for more information.
5. Order from Lake SWCD at 440-350-2730.

We are nearing the end of the ordering period for this spring, but the program will be ongoing with vines available at Vintage Ohio and again next spring.

### NORTHEAST OHIO FOOD CONGRESS

The Northeast Ohio Food Congress was held at Hiram College last November. It brought together people from across the region to collaborate and plan for a local food system in Northeast Ohio. One of the key objectives of the Congress was the formation of countywide food policy councils. Other objectives included supporting local producers and increasing productive capacity, enhancing local food infrastructure, improving access to healthy food by underserved communities and strengthening linkages between farm and city. Nine delegates represented Lake County.

The Congress generated a lot of enthusiasm and momentum. We formed our own Lake County food policy council in January with about a dozen members, ranging from growers to market managers and entrepreneurial leaders. We have met three times, and are working on determining our goals and items for action. One task that has been clearly identified is to increase consumer awareness of the availability and bounty of local food products and the benefits of eating locally. Janet Podolak, food writer from The News Herald will be working with us to include information on local food happenings in the newspaper. We also plan to create an online presence to reach a wider audience. We haven't yet created a name for our council, but having a group of people working together to identify objectives and find solutions is a giant step towards strengthening our local farm economy and promoting the health of our citizenry.

### HISPANIC GROWER/FARMERS' MARKET PROJECT

We have received a grant from OSU Extension's Center for Farmland Policy Innovation, matched by Ohio Department of Agriculture's Rural Rehabilitation Program to fund a Hispanic Grower/Farmers' Market Project. We will be working with five families this first year (of a two-year pilot program) to locate land where they can grow produce, some of which will be culturally significant varieties of peppers, chilies, beans and tomatillos, provide business training and help locate potential markets where their produce can be sold.

Lake SWCD is collaborating with John Niedzialek of the Western Reserve Resource Conservation and Development Council, Veronica Dahlberg, Director of Hispanas Organizadas de Lake y Ashtabula (HOLA), Parker Bosley, a former chef who has promoted local foods in Northeast Ohio for more than a decade, Bruce Cormack, of Cormack's Market Garden, and Tom Lix, Director of Lake Erie College's Center for Entrepreneurship to help Hispanic farmers start farm market businesses in Northeast Ohio. Look for new faces and new varieties of produce at Farmers' Markets around the county this summer!



### DO YOU OWN A CENTURY FARM?

Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District is partnering with the Ohio Department of Agriculture to identify and honor Century Farms. This program honors those families that have maintained the same farm for at least 100 years. The Ohio Century Farm program recognizes these Century Farm families for their many contributions to Ohio's agricultural development and our heritage as frontier farmers. Qualifying registrants receive an heirloom certificate signed by the governor. For more information or a registration application, please contact Maurine Orndorff at Lake County Soil and Water Conservation Office, 440-350-2730 or [morndorff@lakecountyohio.gov](mailto:morndorff@lakecountyohio.gov).

## NOTES FROM OUR CONSERVATION PARTNERS

### MENTOR MARSH FUNDRAISER

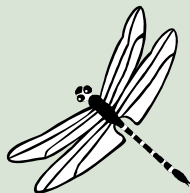
#### Friends of Mentor Marsh Yard Sale

Proceeds to fund improvements to the Carol H. Sweet Nature Center and provide educational materials.

**Saturday, June 6, 2009**

**9 a.m.-2 p.m.**

**Nature, House, Guy and Kid stuff  
Silent auction of local vendor goods  
Raffle**



#### Mentor Marsh Nature Center

5185 Corduroy Road, Mentor-Headlands

Donations welcome. Drop off at Carol H Sweet Nature Center Saturday & Sundays 12-5. For pick-up, leave a message at (440) 257-0777 or call (440) 209-0634.

### STREAM QUALITY MONITORING WORKSHOPS

ODNR Division of Natural Areas and Preserves is hosting a series of volunteer monitor training workshops. The free workshops will show you how you can help them assess the water quality in our local Scenic Rivers.

Workshops in Lake County include May 20th at Old River Farm Park in Willoughby Hills and June 1st at Helen Hazen Wyman Metropark in Concord Twp. Both programs are 5:00-7:00 PM. For more information and to register, contact the Stream Quality Monitoring Coordinator, Billie Jagers at (330) 527-2961 or via e-mail at [billie@config.com](mailto:billie@config.com).

*(Continued from page 1)*

summer long. No matter what time of year you are fertilizing, don't fertilize while it is raining! This just speeds up the rate at which the nutrients reach the stormwater system and fertilize the algae instead of your lawn. It is recommended that you use a fertilizer with 50% insoluble nitrogen, which will also help avoid water pollution.

Handling fertilizer safely is common sense. Try not to fertilize impervious surfaces, such as sidewalks or driveways. If you do get fertilizer on these surfaces, sweep it back into the lawn instead of hosing it off into the storm drain. Clean up spills, even in the lawn. This will keep you from 'burning' the lawn as well as preventing water pollution.

Why does it matter? Fertilizers in our surface waters encourage algae to grow. The algae can rob the water of oxygen, killing fish and aquatic insects, and decreasing water quality. It also makes swimming unattractive and fishing difficult. In a few cases, algae-filled water can be a human health concern as well.

For more information on using fertilizers, or to order a soil test kit, contact Lake SWCD at 440-350-2730 or via e-mail at [soil@lakecountyohio.gov](mailto:soil@lakecountyohio.gov). You can also go online to <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/4000/4006.html> for a fact sheet from OSU Extension.

## STORMWATER BASINS

PAUL BOWYER, STORMWATER SPECIALIST

We see them everywhere, particularly in newer subdivisions and larger commercial developments, but just what is the purpose of these ponds, and how are they helping improve the water quality in our streams and Lake Erie? Stormwater ponds (commonly referred to as retention ponds or detention ponds) are a type of stormwater management practice which is intended to mitigate down-stream flooding and in newer designs provide some degree of stormwater quality improvement.

**Flood Reduction** Prior to 2003, the main design purpose for stormwater ponds was the mitigation of flooding. When it rains in a natural setting, the vast majority of water from a typical storm event soaks into the ground becoming groundwater, rather than flowing over the surface and becoming run-off. In contrast, when it rains in a developed area, because of the abundance of driveways, roads, roofs, and compacted soils, a much larger portion of the water becomes run-off, flowing directly into storm drains and ditches, and then into streams and rivers. This increase in stormwater run-off creates higher flows in our rivers and greater flooding impact.

Most stormwater ponds are designed to decrease the run-off volume caused by the impervious surfaces of a development. They do this by allowing the run-off to temporarily raise the level of the pond during a rain event; this water is then released at a more moderate rate, over a longer period of time, through the pond's outlet structure. In other words, stormwater flows into a stormwater pond faster than it flows out. The extent to which a stormwater pond can mitigate flooding is primarily a function of how much freeboard the pond has, or the vertical distance between the normal water level and the overflow structure.

**Stormwater Water Quality Improvement** In addition to mitigating floods, stormwater ponds also improve water quality. All retention ponds (wet ponds) provide a degree of stormwater quality improvement by allowing time for particulate pollutants such as sediment to settle out of the water. In addition, wet ponds that support aquatic vegetation can absorb some quantity of dissolved pollutants.

Since 2003, most stormwater ponds have been built as "water quality ponds", which are retention or detention ponds that have an extended water retention period and a multi-stage filtering outlet structure. Excess water in ponds designed primarily for flood control usually pass the stormwater from a rain event into the surface water 6 to 12 hours after a storm. A water quality pond extends this retention period to 24 to 48 hours, allowing more time for the settling out of finer sediment and pollutant particles. To achieve this extended detention period, these ponds are usually constructed with a two stage outlet structure. The outlet structure is often an under drain system in the floor of the pond, which provides additional filtering, because the water must flow through gravel before it leaves the pond.

Properly managed water quality ponds are one of the most important practices for protecting our streams and Lake Erie. For more information about water quality basins, or for questions on their maintenance needs, contact Paul Bowyer at 440-350-2730 or e-mail [pbowyer@lakecountyohio.gov](mailto:pbowyer@lakecountyohio.gov)



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## WHO WANTS TO BE A CONSERVATIONIST?

In Greek Mythology, spring arrives when Persephone is reunited with her mother Demeter. See what you know about some other signs of spring.

- 1) The Spring Peeper is known in Latin as *Pseudacris crucifer*. The term crucifer refers to:
  - A) The unique broccoli-like aroma of the females
  - B) The X on the back of the adult frog
  - C) The shape of the egg clutch
  - D) Markings on the tail of the tadpole
- 2) One of the first spring flowers is bright yellow and often mistaken for dandelion. Colts Foot has which of the following traits:
  - A) Brought to North America by Europeans
  - B) Used historically as a cough cure
  - C) Likes to grow in disturbed soils
  - D) Flowers before the leaves emerge
- 3) Astronomically, spring begins:
  - A) March 15, the Ides of March
  - B) March 21, the equinox
  - C) First full moon in April
  - D) When the sun first rises in Pisces
- 4) If you are at the North Pole on the first day of spring, which of the following would be true?
  - A) The sun would circle the horizon
  - B) You couldn't watch a sunset for the next 6 months
  - C) The sun would be directly overhead at noon
  - D) The aurora would be particularly strong
- 5) Silent Spring, published in 1964, was written by Rachel Carson. This book is said to have done which of the following:
  - A) Started the Environmental Movement
  - B) Described a world without birds
  - C) Caused the deaths of thousands of people from malaria
  - D) Triggered the banning of DDT in the US

Answers:  
(1) B, (2) all, (3) B, (4) A and B, (5) all

## LAKE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

125 E. Erie St., Painesville, OH 44077

•440-350-2730 (main number) •FAX 440-350-2601

Toll-free •428-4348 ext. 2730 Madison/Perry

•918-2730 Cleveland/Western Lake County

•1-800-899-LAKE ext 2730 outside Lake County only

Office Hours: Mon.-Fri. 7:30 am-4:00 pm

•E-mail: [soil@lakecountyohio.org](mailto:soil@lakecountyohio.org)

•Web site: [www.lakecountyohio.org/soil](http://www.lakecountyohio.org/soil)

PAUL BOWYER, Stormwater Specialist	350-2092
PAM BROWN, District Secretary/Treasurer	350-2041
DAN DONALDSON, District Administrator	350-2030
CHAD EDGAR, Urban Stream Specialist	350-2032
BETH LANDERS, Education/Information Coordinator	350-2033
MAURINE ORNDORFF, Agricultural Programs Technician	350-5863
MATTHEW SCHARVER, Resource Protection Specialist	350-2031
AL BONNIS, District Conservationist, NRCS	437-5888
JOHN NIEDZIALEK, Western Reserve RC&D Coordinator	350-2034

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### MEMBER OF:

- American Farmland Trust
- Lake County Farm Bureau
- Nursery Growers of Lake County Ohio
- National Association of Conservation Districts
- Ohio Federation of Soil & Water Conservation Districts

**AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER:** All Lake SWCD and USDA programs and services are available without regard to race, age, gender, national origin, political beliefs, color, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or marital or family status.

The public is invited to attend Lake SWCD's monthly Board meetings, held the fourth Tuesday of the month at 4:00 pm at 125 East Erie St., Painesville. Meeting announcements appear under the public agenda in the News-Herald and on the Lake SWCD website. Please call in advance to let us know you will be attending.